The Substitute

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/18261950.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Beverly Katz, Alana Bloom, Jack Crawford, Will Graham's Dogs, Buster (Hannibal)
Additional Tags:	Hannibal decides not to be a dick, for once, He tells Will about the encephalitis, Will gets treatment, Hannibal volunteers to take over his classes, Hannibal's still a killer, Cannibal with a heart of gold, Will realizes he might be into Hannibal, And has his standard freakout, Fluff Smut and some basic teaching theory debate, season 1 AU
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-03-27 Completed: 2019-04-10 Words: 10,502 Chapters: 2/2

The Substitute

by Devereauxs_Disease

Summary

When Hannibal tells Will he's sick, Will is skeptical. Before he knows it, he's laying in a hospital bed and being told he's going nowhere for two weeks. Will is distraught until Hannibal swoops in and offers to take over Will's courses at the FBI Academy.

Will doesn't mind Hannibal showing up every night with a home-cooked meal, but he might just resent Hannibal becoming the most popular teacher at the Academy in just two weeks...

Season 1 AU - if Hannibal wasn't such a MASSIVE dick.

Notes

Everyone send extra thanks to Gwilbers who proofed this so quickly I was able to post tonight! She really is the best.

See the end of the work for more notes

The New Will Graham

It started, as so many things did when Hannibal was involved, with a sniff. Will had been examining a book when he felt a presence behind him. Hannibal had never seemed like a man who cared for boundaries, be they social or instinctual. He always seemed at least an inch closer that Will would usually allow. And here he was again, inside Will's bubble not overtly pushing and yet scaling hard built walls all the same. The hair on the back of his neck prickled and a flush ran through his chest and neck. It was a reaction to a predator, Will knew that, told himself it was natural.

What was less natural was his impulse to lean back, to meet the predator halfway.

He had been having conversations – the phrase the cagey psychiatrist had insisted upon – with Hannibal for nearly six months and for some reason the man's approach still sent a little zing down his spine. Late at night, he'd dream of Hannibal's long fingers sinking into his hair, grabbing him tight and bending him back. He'd rouse covered in sweat and panting, aching for something he refused to conjure in his waking hours.

Will let his body tense as the smell of subtle cologne filled his nostrils, he exhaled slowly through his mouth, trying to expel Hannibal's scent and the urge to draw in more of the man behind him.

Then, he heard the sniff.

"Did you just *smell* me?" The headache at the base of Will's brain receded to an aching throb as another tingling sensation ran through him.

"Difficult to avoid." Will turned, planning on escaping the smothering proximity of Hannibal, but he paused. There was something in the doctor's inscrutable features, an odd sort of knowledge. Will wanted to crack open that impassive face and dig around in the recesses of Hannibal's skull. He had a feeling there would be dark treasures to find if only he could pry it open.

"What?" Will asked, watching as Hannibal's face went back to neutral.

"I really must introduce you to a finer aftershave, that smells-"

"No, that's not it."

"I'm sorry?"

"You're considering something," Will's headache was back, throbbing as he scanned Hannibal's face. The room grew hot and his breathing staggered just a bit. "but it's not my aftershave."

Hannibal's face seemed to brighten, his eyes narrowed in pleasure while his mouth twitched into a suggestion of a smile. Will still felt as if he were melting, but there was a

funny little glow in his chest.

He'd surprised Hannibal and that surprise had pleased the doctor. If his head exploded in the next ten minutes, at least he'd have that smile to think of as the world snapped out.

Hannibal's face wavered for another moment, a debate warring within him that showed only through microscopic raises of eyebrows and thinning of his lips. Finally, he made a decision. "Have your headaches been any worse lately, more frequent?"

"Yes, actually." Will moved away, he needed air that didn't smell like Hannibal.

"Would you mind coming with me?"

"OK." The answer was immediate and rather mortifying. Will ducked his head and frowned at his own eagerness.

The air shifted and Will's body began to ping again – Hannibal was back in his orbit.

"Where are we going?"

"Hopkins, I have a friend I'd like you to meet."

Every interaction with Hannibal seemed to be conducted in a whirlwind. It seemed all Will ever had to do was crack open a door and suddenly he was eating delectable scrambled eggs in his boxer shorts with a relative stranger.

The hospital was no different.

He drifted through intake in a fog, catching snippets of Hannibal's demands and name dropping. He was pretty sure Hannibal had summoned a specialist from home to see him in the dead of night. There was lots of talking, and the room got hot again.

In the distance, Will could hear the sounds of hooves, hollowly clicking closer. He edged himself closer to Hannibal, and the hoof-steps seemed to fade.

Will was presented with a pad and Hannibal told him to draw a clock. He did, which seemed to cause another flurry of activity from the neurologist and the nurses. He never claimed to be an artist…

Will blinked and found himself strapped to a machine. He pulled at the restraints on his wrist.

"Will," Hannibal's voice found him in the cavernous reaches of the machine. "Lie still please, you're almost done."

He took a breath, but he still felt tense.

“You’ve done so well, Will.” He felt his shoulders loosen just a fraction. “Have I told you about the history of neurological illnesses? In the Victorian era…”

Will stilled finally, timing his breaths with the breaks in Hannibal’s sentences.

Every time Will let his eyes close, it seemed the world sped by. He opened them again to find himself connected to IVs in a hospital bed. Hannibal sat beside him, neck at an odd angle as he slept and hand resting on the side of Will’s hospital bed. The doctor looked amazingly pristine, just a few wrinkles in his jacket and a few strands of hair falling over his forehead.

With a smile, Will shifted until Hannibal’s fingers grazed his arm. He let himself fall asleep, the tips of Hannibal’s fingers warm against his wrist.

The next time Will opened his eyes, a nurse and doctor were shining a light in his face. They explained what NMDA Receptor Antibody Encephalitis was, and that he’d be in the hospital for two weeks. Will turned to look for Hannibal, only to find him gone.

He blinked and Hannibal was back by his side, in a new pristine outfit and reading on his tablet. Will found himself wishing Hannibal was rumpled again. Hannibal smiled when he noticed Will’s eyes on him. He leaned forward, assuring Will he’d called a service to take care of the dogs, and that he would personally see to them on the weekends.

Will mumbled something close to thanks and let his eyelids fall shut again.

The next time his eyes opened, Jack was hovering over his face. Will immediately closed his eyes, but sadly time stayed right where it was. Jack poked him once, hard, in the chest.

“Will, come on, Will.”

“What?”

“I need you to-”

“I’m in the hospital, Jack.”

“I can see that, Will, but I need the password to your work computer. Hannibal wanted to update some part of your syllabus and take a look at your midterm in case you’re not-”

“Hannibal?”

“Yes, he volunteered to cover your classes while you’re out.” Jack laughed. “He brought muffins for his first day. Jimmy asked if we could keep him.”

“His patients…”

“Hannibal said he had it covered, and frankly, I’m not going to ask. All I know is we have a doctor teaching the course and volunteering to consult on a few cases while you rest.” Jack laid a heavy hand on Will’s shoulder. “Just give me your password and you won’t have to see me for two whole weeks.”

Will huffed softly, letting his eyes fall shut as he murmured, “Buster8MySocks.”

After four days, Will had gotten used to the routine. He slept for long hours, thanked the nurses that came in with fresh IV bags and helped him to the bathroom, and watched terrible daytime television. He was getting alarmingly good at guessing prices without going over.

When he blinked now, he didn’t lose time – maybe an hour or two for a nap, but opening his eyes didn’t result in fear and confusion anymore. He knew where he was, he knew the day, and even better, he knew who he was. Now, Will would blink just for the pleasure of it, just to reassure himself that when his eyes opened, there would be no feathered beast clicking down the hall, his feet wouldn’t ache from walking for miles barefoot on freezing asphalt.

He was Will Graham, it was Thursday morning, and he was in Johns Hopkins Hospital waiting for his nightly visitor.

Hannibal showed up at 7:30pm every evening. Will wondered if Hannibal chose the time in honor of their weekly “talks”. Regardless of the symbolism, a perfectly tailored Hannibal would breeze into the room every night bearing papers and a bag of exquisitely prepared food.

Hannibal would settle next to Will, drawing the rolling tray laden with food nearby. Will would smile quietly as Hannibal launched into an impossibly pretentious breakdown of the food. When Hannibal finally finished his description of the culinary wonder before Will, the empath was salivating. But before he allowed himself to take a bite, he indulged in the best part of his day: Reducing Hannibal’s beautiful food into the most insulting form he could think of.

Silkie chicken broth became chicken soup.

Beef wellington became a hot pocket.

Croque monsieur became grilled cheese.

Every time Hannibal deflated as if Will took a pin to him, which really shouldn’t be as amusing as it was. But better still was a second later, when Hannibal would glance up from his insulted masterpiece, eyes dancing in amusement at Will’s terrible manners. Will wished he could bottle that look, or the warmth that made it spread through his chest.

Tonight, as Hannibal walked into the room, smiling. Will sniffed the air, trying to get a hint of Hannibal's dinner so he could start working on his insults. Hannibal turned as he pulled a covered dish from his bag, eyebrow quirking just slightly at Will's eager scrutiny. He ducked his head to properly lay out the silverware he brought from home, but Will could guess at the doctor's smile by the slight swelling of his cheeks.

Taking a deep breath, Hannibal uncovered both dishes, rolling the tray to sit over Will's lap. "Handmade tagliatelle with Savore Sanguino and roasted lamb."

Will couldn't help the wide grin spreading his mouth. "Oh, spaghetti and meatballs, great."

Hannibal's chest caved, shoulders slumping as he sat in the stiff hospital chair. The doctor took a steadying breath, neatly plucking a polished golden fork from the vinyl covered tray before acidly saying, "Let me state once again how thrilled I am that you are feeling more like your old self, Will."

It was the exact same physical performance each evening. Will could have done a fair imitation of it now. And yet, Will lived for it. This little game and the feigned disappointment – it was a small dance, the first tentative steps of a waltz. Will wasn't sure what this little dance lead to, or even who was leading them along, he just knew he liked practicing.

When Hannibal glanced up, Will felt the warm rush go through him. The doctor's eyes were practically sparkling in amusement as he regarded Will. It made Will feel fevered again, but not in an unpleasant way.

Twirling a few strands of pasta on his fork, Will brought it to his lips for a bite. It was perfect, as it always was. Flavors danced across Will's tongue, the perfect balance of sharp acids and rich meats. Making a little noise in the back of his throat that immediately recaptured Hannibal's sharp gaze, Will swallowed. "Delicious, Dr. Lecter. Way better than the canned stuff."

The smile lines at the corners of Hannibal's eyes deepened, the only hint at how amused he truly was. "Please Will, your effusiveness is embarrassing."

"No, really," Will twirled another forkful. "I bet you could put Chef Boyardee out of business."

Hannibal merely watched Will as he chewed, mouth quirked to the side. When he swallowed, Hannibal dabbed gently at his mouth and only then did Will realize he'd been staring with a fork of twirled spaghetti suspended midair. "Your Criminal Pathology lecture was quite interesting today."

"First time for everything, I guess," Will said around a mouthful of pasta.

"I see quite a keen mind in Ms. Mendez."

"Who?"

“Dark hair, sits in the front row, always smiling and eager to ask interesting questions?”

Will frowned through another forkful of pasta. “Someone was smiling in my class?”

“Of course.”

“And asking questions…”

“Do you usually wait for the end of lectures? I find that it’s more effective to address questions as they come.”

“I usually discourage questions,” Will muttered, slurping a noodle just to watch a muscle in Hannibal’s cheek tick. “Especially from the eager ones at the front. They don’t want knowledge, they just want their egos stroked.”

“Ah, well, I believe your position on that is quite clear,” Hannibal held up a dish. “More spaghetti and meatballs? I brought extra since your appetite seems to be improving.”

Will grinned.

“You can’t possibly ascribe the mutilation to something so base,” Will waved his filet-o-fish – something Hannibal had described as smoked salmon involtini with artichoke hearts – in the doctor’s face. “What’s next? He had a bad relationship with his mother?”

“Based off of our knowledge of the pathologies, I think it was a fair assessment of the crime.” Hannibal looked at the paper in his hands. “It’s nothing inspired, to be sure, but this is perfectly acceptable. Something the FBI would certainly put in a report now.”

“That’s the problem,” Will grumbled. “No insight, just rote regurgitation. Fail him.”

“I’m not going to give Mr. Lewis a failing grade just because he fails to inspire you.” Hannibal pulled the paper back. “This is an average paper and will receive an average grade.”

“Great. More idiots with badges.”

Hannibal’s mouth tightened. He tapped at the photo on the table, a woman who had been torn to bits and splayed in a church ground. “Not everyone has your astounding empathy, Will. You’d do well to apply it to some of your students. They’re not all hopeless, you just make them feel so. With a little bit of encouragement-”

“I’m interested in catching killers, not fishing for compliments from wide-eyed students.”

“Excuse me?”

“Admit it – you’re bored with them too, you just see this as an opportunity to feed your ego,” Will cocked his head, squinting. “Be the brilliant Dr. Lecter everyone loves so much. I don’t care because I think it’s a waste of time, you pretend to care because it feeds your ego.”

“I suppose we simply have incompatible teaching philosophies.” Hannibal gathered the papers and neatly put them in his bag.

“What are you doing? We’ve only gone over half.”

“You need rest. I’m sure I’ll be able to fish for compliments on my own,” Hannibal packed his china and Tupperware, impassive mask firmly in place. “Have a good evening, Will.”

“Dr. Lecter-”

“I believe I told you I had amended the syllabus. I’ll get a copy of the National Forensic Journal issue so you may read it as well.”

Hannibal swung his coat over his shoulder and was gone in a flare of cashmere. Will was left with a handful of beautifully smoked salmon and a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach.

It had taken a bit of beseeching, but Will had gotten the nurses to allow him to shower. He had scrubbed himself with harsh smelling hospital soaps while a large orderly named Barney watched, poised to catch him if he fell. The whole ordeal was a bit humiliating, but at least he smelled better and had a clean hospital gown on as he watched the clock tick toward 7:30.

Angling himself on the bed, Will looked at his reflection in the dark window. He ran a hand through his hair, trying to sort the curls. He needed a haircut. Maybe Hannibal would recommend someone?

By 7:45, Will’s stomach was in knots. The nurse had walked in with a sad smile and offered to bring him a tray of food. Will shook his head, he’d never be able to eat now.

At 7:50, the door pushed open and Will could have cried at the sound – until he saw Alana. She smiled at him, blowing some hair from her face as she wrestled with a few bags.

“I’m so sorry, Will. Hannibal said you’d be expecting me by 7:30 but I ran into a friend I interned with and I couldn’t get away.” Will slumped back into his bed, suddenly very tired. Alana pulled familiar looking containers out of the bag.

“Did he send you with food?”

Alana smiled. “Doesn’t he always? I don’t think I’ve ever left his house without at least four containers.”

She sat them on the rolling tray carefully, before pulling the tray to rest over Will's lap. "OK, I know he said they were Chile rellenos with some type of braised beef and a special sauce…damn, I should have written it down."

"Jalapeño poppers," Will said sullenly.

Alana laughed brightly. "I won't tell him you said that."

Will wished she would.

The article had been brilliant, as had Hannibal's insights, penned in impossibly neat script on several margins. Will had chatted with Alana about the article as well, then about the dogs, and finally, when desperation creeped into Will, the weather. It was a pleasantly dull evening.

Alana was beautiful and charming, polite to a fault.

Will was desperately grateful when she finally left.

She leaned over to kiss his cheek, and Will felt no thrill, no impulse to turn and catch her mouth. Alana petted his curls like he was a beloved family spaniel and left with a promise of dinner and a visit tomorrow.

Will spent the rest of the night in misery. He picked up his cell six times before he finally opened it and typed out a text to Hannibal.

I liked the jalapeño poppers

He stared at the text for a while after he hit send, debating adding an apology or maybe a plea to visit tomorrow. He was halfway through a black and white melodrama about a murderous woman when his phone pinged.

Thank you.

Will studied the words, picked at them for hidden meanings or chastisement. He typed out five possible responses, before deleting them all. He fell asleep before the movie ended, dreaming of an empty dining room and crushing silence.

At 7:30, Will waited for another visit from Alana. At 7:45, he sighed, wondering who she was talking to this time. At 8, he was getting pissed.

Bev slammed into the room at 8:15, slapping two sacks of food on the rolling tray and holding up a drink tray. "I KNOW, I KNOW! But I brought Shake Shack!"

Will smiled. “I better have a black and white shake.”

Bev rolled her eyes, holding out the shake. “No shit. What am I, an asshole?”

“So, no Alana, huh?”

“She was stuck in a meeting and I told her I’d come.” Bev batted her eyes and dipped a fry in some cheese sauce. “Why, am I not pretty enough?”

“You’ll do.”

They chatted quietly in between bites of cheeseburgers, Will laughing when Bev did her impression of Jack yelling at Z. He had missed her. Hell, he’d missed overly processed food.

And yet…

“So, uh, you at the Academy at all today?”

Bev smiled, slurping obnoxiously at her shake. “Yeah, I was.”

“Oh, how, *uh*, how are things?”

“What things?”

“Just things.”

Bev smiled and slurped again. “Well, they just planted the spring floral beds so the walkway is a mess and things smell like manure. But I’m sure it’ll be lovely in a week. You remember Ian, the old guard at the front door? He’s retiring in June. It’s a shame, he was there before me. Oh, I think they’re redoing the floors on the third floor.”

“Seriously?”

“What? What else do you want to know?” Bev blinked innocently.

“Did you see him or not?”

“I just told you I did. You want me to bring Ian a message for you? I didn’t know you were so cl-”

“GODDAMN IT HOW IS HANNIBAL?” Will threw a fry at her. She caught it and dragged it through the last of the cheese sauce.

“OH, *Hannibal*!” Bev exclaimed. “You mean everyone’s favorite professor?”

Will glared.

“Seriously, did you know he held class outside today?”

“What?”

“Yep. Found him under a group of trees talking about decapitation force like he was reciting poetry.”

“Jesus.”

“He is developing quite the following.” Bev laughed. “I could barely hear him over the dreamy sighing. And when he took off his jacket, I think there were audible gasps.”

“Glad he’s having so much fun.” Will tried not to clench his jaw.

“Uh-huh. I had to talk to him about a casefile, so I waited until he let the class go and-”

“You know I really don’t care.” Will shoved the tray away from himself and watched the blinking lights on Wolfe Street.

Bev raised an eyebrow. “That’s funny, he really doesn’t care about you, either.”

Will frowned.

Bev shrugged. “He certainly didn’t care when he asked me to check and make sure Alana would bring you dinner. And he seemed really aloof when he insisted he could rush home and make something suitable for your palate before his three hour study group. Oh, and man did he not care when he asked me to text him later with an update on your general well-being and vital signs since the new nurse on your night shift rudely told him that information was confidential when he called last night.”

Something burned bright in Will’s chest. The uptick in his pulse was subtle, but his heart monitor betrayed him. There was no way Bev hadn’t noticed that. “Why didn’t you get food from him?”

“OK, one, fuck you, buddy. I drove over an hour to get here. I wasn’t adding a forty-minute detour just so I could play food delivery person.”

“Sorry.”

“And two, I’m not sure you deserve nice food.” Bev leaned forward. “What did you say to him? He looks heartbroken.”

“I- I told him the only reason he likes teaching was because it gave him an audience of admirers.”

Bev whistled lowly. “See? You don’t deserve Hannibal’s food. I’m not even sure you deserve Shake Shack.”

“He loves parading like a learned peacock in front of them – you just told me they all adore him.”

“Maybe they just like having a teacher who doesn’t terrify them?”

Will opened his mouth but Bev held up a hand.

“Did you know he’s taking patients in the mornings? Completely redid his schedule so he can drive down to Quantico in afternoon traffic and teach four classes.”

“He said he-”

“And then, he holds office hours before driving back through two states to make you dinner and bring it here every night.” Bev tilted her head. “It’s amazing what he’s willing to do for compliments. He must be starved for them, huh?”

“I-”

“It’s gotta be that, right?” Bev slurped the last dregs of her shake. “Just imagine working that hard to get a compliment, then getting…empathy.”

“I appreciate what he’s done…for my students.”

“I sure hope the students do. If they don’t, they should probably tell him, before he runs himself into the ground. Do you know I saw a wrinkle on his suit today? Like for real, his shirt wasn’t pressed.”

Will didn’t like the idea of anyone seeing Hannibal rumpled. Hannibal wouldn’t like it either. He was always so controlled, so careful with what he presented to the world. Wrinkles and humanity were something Hannibal should only share with someone he trusted.

“Maybe I should call him.”

“Maybe.” Bev sighed. “Or at least let him down easily.”

“I don’t like the idea of letting him down.”

Bev grinned. “You like the idea of getting him up?”

Will threw a napkin in her stupid, grinning face.

Will texted the moment Bev left.

Bev brought me ground sirloin patties, hand sliced potatoes au gratin with sauce on the side, and a frozen mixture of cream and fudge.

Will felt a little thrill when his phone pinged.

I’m happy she could meet your standards.

With an exhale, Will ran his hand through his hair. This was not what he wanted.

I missed

Will paused, what the hell did he miss? The food? The company? Hannibal? Will deleted the text.

How're the classes?

He sighed at himself. There was a reason he never did this.

Everyone is fine, Will.

"So, still pretty pissed, then." Will tapped his hand on the phone.

I was wondering if you wanted to go over the syllabus. I think I'll still be out for the midterm.

"Come on, Hannibal," Will pleaded with the phone.

I'll have Alana bring over the revised syllabus as well as a copy of the exam with my notes.

Will wanted to throw the phone. Fine. He'd bite the bullet.

I'd rather you bring it.

The response was immediate.

I assure you I haven't altered your careful coursework drastically enough to warrant this much concern.

Will made a small noise in the back of his throat. He was going to kill him. He was going to finish his round of medications, go see his dogs, then drive to Baltimore and murder Hannibal Lecter. He double tapped the contact and listened as the phone rang.

"Hello?" Hannibal's voice was so perfectly neutral, as if he hadn't seen Will's contact information appear on his phone before answering – on the fourth ring, the petty bastard.

"I don't think you're ruining my class." Will closed his eyes. "I'm betting the cadets don't think that either."

"I am sorry that my methods-"

"Please bring me dinner." Will kept his eyes closed, hoping to ward himself from the terrible pleading sound of his voice.

"Will, did Ms. Katz fail to bring you-"

"She was fine, Alana was fine, I just-"

"You missed my food."

"I missed…" He couldn't say it, not like this. "I'm missing a lot recently. I'm stuck here for another few days, I only see my dog via update texts from the service, I just…"

His throat constricted. Will took a shaky breath.

“Will?”

“Will you come tomorrow?”

“Of course.” The warmth in Hannibal’s voice seemed to heat the phone in Will’s hands. “Any requests for dinner? Tacos? Meatloaf? Perhaps canned meat crushed into a skillet?”

Will laughed, feeling sleepy and loose as he settled into the bed. “Your pick.”

“Hmmm, I shall endeavor to make it as impressive as Ms. Katz’s concoction.”

“Just bring it yourself, OK?”

“I will.” The rumble of Hannibal’s voice in his ear made Will’s eyes droop. “Get some rest, please.”

“That’s all I do.”

The last sound Will heard before he fell asleep was the soft huff of Hannibal’s laugh.

Will was freshly showered and shaved when the clock hit 7:30pm. It had taken some convincing to get a razor and shaving cream, but eventually the nurses complied. It had been a bit odd to shave with Barney supervising over his shoulder, but hopefully little nick under his chin didn’t show.

At five minutes after, Will was getting annoyed. Hannibal would never be so rude as to keep someone waiting – so this was either part of his punishment, or he’d again been foisted off onto Alana or Bev.

When Hannibal finally arrived, he looked…odd. His hair was slightly disheveled, his clothes were hanging oddly on him, a bulky coat making him seem hulking instead of elegant. His whole being seemed rather stressed. Will experienced another surge of guilt that he in any way damaged the veneer Hannibal wore so well. Will had meant only to pick at it to find the man beneath, not expose him to the world.

The doctor stomped into the room, setting his bag of food on the table and turning to close the door. That was odd. Hannibal had never bothered with the door before.

“Are you OK?”

Hannibal glanced to Will with a slight smile. “Typically, one asks that question of the person in the hospital.”

“Don’t take this the wrong way, but you…look odd.”

“Yes, well, compromises had to be-” Hannibal drew a sharp breath, glaring at his chest, which…what the hell was wrong with his chest? Instead of broad and strong it looked bulky and was it moving? Hannibal leveled a flat gaze at Will. “Please don’t make any noise.”

Will furrowed his brow as he watched Hannibal loosen his large coat, revealing a small black and brown blur. When Hannibal shifted again to remove the creature from the coat, it snapped at his fingers, wagging his tail.

“Buster!” Will immediately snapped his mouth closed when Hannibal glared at him. Holding out his hands he grinned as Hannibal put the wiggling mass in his arms. He wanted to cry. He wanted to grab Hannibal and kiss the life out of him. He settled for pressing smiling kisses into Buster’s hard head. “How did you-”

“With several scratches and a few bites,” Hannibal said sourly as he unpacked the food. “I attempted to bring Winston, but at his size, I’m afraid I would have been directed to the maternity ward.”

Will laughed, rubbing at Buster’s ears. He looked at Hannibal and saw the lines around his eyes deepen in satisfaction. “Thank you.”

Hannibal busied himself plating the food. Will noticed with some amusement that there was a smaller plate, with a few cut bits of steak on it. As Hannibal arranged things, Will focused on running his fingers over Buster’s fur. “I uh, I forget sometimes to use my empathy on the living. At least the ones I see every day.”

“It’s not necessary-”

“You got me help when I needed it. You rearranged your life so I wouldn’t be bothered.” Will looked up, chancing some eye contact. “You bring me delicious food. I…I shouldn’t have let the fact that you’re an arrogant peacock take away from that.”

Hannibal blinked, then laughed. Will had never heard him laugh beyond the polite huffs when people told a joke. This sound was cacophonous and unrefined – Will wanted to hear it again and again. Hannibal gathered himself, his amusement only found on traces of his features. “Thank you, Will. That’s quite gracious.”

Rolling the tray over to Buster and Will, Hannibal cleared his throat. “Seared tenderloin with salt and pepper for Buster, open-faced spanakopita with hand-worked phyllo and spinach from my garden for us.”

Will selected a chunk of meat and fed it to Buster before picking up the spanakopita and taking a delicate bite. He chewed, his mouth coiling into a smile as Hannibal watched him.

After a moment, Hannibal cracked. “Say it.”

Will couldn’t keep the glee from his voice. “Best pizza I ever tasted.”

The New Hannibal Lecter

Chapter Summary

Will adjusts his teaching philosophy. Hannibal eats a terrible cookie.

Chapter Notes

OK so...last week was a whole thing. Long sad story short, I was sad, my mom was sad, crying, drinking wine, and eating ice cream were just bigger priorities than posting/writing. Sorry to leave anyone following the story hanging, but I promise it's finished.
I haven't responded to anyone because I was being a delinquent sad author, but I did read everyone's comments and they totally made me smile. I'll promise I'll get to responding this week!
As always, Gwilbers is the best and proofed everything to save you from reading utter nonsense.

It felt odd coming home after being away for so long. The house didn't look like a ship on the ocean in the afternoon light, it looked empty and dull. He would be alone tonight, with no elaborate dinners and only the soft sounds of his dogs snuffling the floor for crumbs. It used to be the only way Will ever found peace.

So why did it sound so lonely now?

Bev slammed the car door, hefting Will's bag over her shoulder. "You OK?"

"Yeah," Will shook his head and forced a smile. "I'm fine."

"You know he's giving the midterm." Bev nudged him. "Otherwise he'd be here."

"What? Who?"

Bev rolled her eyes. "Some guy you don't care about, who tried to argue with the head of the FBI that the midterm could be administered a day early."

Will's smile warmed. "What?"

"Jack was on the phone for forty minutes with the director, trying to explain how a civilian acquired his cell number. Evidently, one of his buddies is on the opera board."

“Jesus.”

“Yeah, but you wouldn’t care about that, would you?”

“Shut up, Bev.”

She shifted the bag over her shoulder. “Fine, let’s get you to the adoring masses.”

Hopping up on the porch, Bev swung the door open, laughing when Will’s dogs flooded out.

Will was knocked over in a matter of minutes, trampled, licked, and thoroughly sniffed by the pack. He laughed grabbing for all of them at once. He paused when his fingers hit something smooth around Winston’s neck. Will sat up, pulling the dog closer.

A fine leather collar sat nestled in Winston’s fur. The other dogs had similarly beautiful collars, all with leather dyed to compliment their coats. Will closed his eyes, imagining Hannibal wrestling Harley and Buster to the ground to latch on the collars.

He ran his fingers over the collar one more time before he noticed Bev snapping pictures of him. She shrugged. “I promised.”

Will let his mouth twist into a sideways grin before he stood and walked inside. The house was the same, but Will could feel Hannibal’s presence. Something in the air had shifted. It might have been the new sheets on his shabby old bed, or the odd centerpiece in the middle of his table—what looked like a dear skull surrounded by flowers.

“I’ve photographed shit like that in crime scenes,” Bev muttered as she texted pictures to a number Will didn’t want to think about.

On a whim, Will ventured to the fridge and threw the door open. It was fully stocked with water, fine juices and glass containers each impeccably labeled. Edging closer Will perused the containers: *Hot Pockets, tacos, tuna casserole, jalapeño poppers* all in in Hannibal’s elegant script, along with reheating instructions.

“So, you OK for the night?” Bev was watching him with a smile. “Not gonna just stand there smiling into your fridge?”

“I’m good.”

“If you need anything, Hannibal should be free after 6.”

“Fuck off, Katz.”

Will’s first day back at the academy was a bit of a bust. Hannibal had taken care of grading the exams and posting them on the student portal. Will knew because he spent three days at home texting with Hannibal like he was a teen with a crush.

They texted about food.

They texted about Will's plan for class Monday.

Hell, Will had sent Hannibal a picture of an interesting flower he found while walking the dogs, just to have the doctor respond in under a minute with the bloom's name, phylum, and a story of how it had been used in Native medicine.

Will had considered inviting Hannibal to his house for dinner—Hannibal had made more than enough food for two in each of the glass containers—but stopped himself each time. Inviting Hannibal to his home, when he was well, when they couldn't even talk about the students, it seemed…leading. If he invited Hannibal over with no excuse or contrivance, what could the doctor possibly think other than Will liked him? Will would have to admit, in no uncertain terms that he just longed for the pleasure of Hannibal's company. And how humiliating it would be to do that only to receive the same bland smile Hannibal gave Alana when she invited herself to dinner?

So, Will decided that he would just view Hannibal as a friend. A friend that he texted pictures of flowers to, but that hardly mattered, right?

He was glad to return to class; the students and the work would be a welcome distraction. And as an added bonus, Hannibal had texted him in the morning to remind him of their 7:30pm session. Will had smiled at the text, running a thumb over the words before promising to be there on time.

Have a good day in class, Will. I look forward to seeing you tonight. I shall prepare something suitably celebratory.

Will walked into his class with a warm feeling in his chest, still caressing the phone in his pocket.

The audible sigh of disappointment that greeted him dampened his mood slightly. Three cadets were at his desk. One woman clasped a tray of cookies in her hands, another woman had a forensics journal, and a man tapped a letter on the desk.

"It's nice to see everyone, I hope the midterm went well."

"Welcome back, Professor Graham." It couldn't have sounded more depressed had Will set the sentence to a viola.

Will sighed, before turning to the group of students at his desk. The woman clutching the cookies spoke first. "Will Hannibal not be back?"

His jaw clenched for some reason. "Dr. Lecter had to return to his patients, Ms…"

"Mendez." She looked at him with unabashed disappointment. "Is there a way I could get these to him? I wanted to thank him, that last study group was amazing."

"So was the cake!" Someone shouted from the front row. The whole class laughed knowingly and suddenly Will wondered how bad it would look if he failed a whole lecture

hall.

"I will be seeing him tonight." Will managed.

"Great." Mendez shoved the cookies into Will's hands and walked back to her seat.

"I, *uh*, I found an article I thought might interest him about the pathologies of serial mutilators," The other woman sat the forensics journal on top of the cookies. "Tell him I wrote my number on the first page if he wants to discuss it."

Will raised his eyebrow at that. The woman blushed and fled. Will sat the cookies that were not for him on the desk, right next to the magazine that wasn't for him either. The man was still hovering to his left. "Yes?"

"This is for Hannibal too." He sat the envelope down. "Just for Hannibal."

Will was going to break a tooth if he didn't unclench his jaw. "What is it?"

"It's for Hannibal."

"I can't just give Dr. Lecter a random envelope…" Will gestured at the little shit, who was smirking at him.

"David."

"David. What if there was anthrax in it? Or objectionable content."

"He won't object."

Will took a soothing breath. He'd just been proven sane, it wouldn't do to strangle some shitty boy on his desk in front of a lecture hall.

"Take your seat."

Will pulled out his lesson plan—the one Hannibal had amended with annoyingly insightful observations as well as a picture of a crime scene Jack must have supplied him—and began the lecture. After 20 minutes, he saw Mendez shift, her hand fidgeting on the desk.

I find that it's more effective to address questions as they come.

Will sighed. *Goddamn it.* "Any questions?"

The entire class seemed to hesitate. Will rolled his eyes. "Come on, it's not a trap. Mendez, you've been about to raise your hand for fifteen minutes."

Mendez straightened in her chair. "I was going to ask if the bites were in fact sexual in nature. From the placement, I thought it could be an act of dominance, maybe he was seeking to destroy her fingers?"

“That’s *uh*, that’s pretty good, actually, Mendez.” Will paused, feeling just a tinge of guilt. “Anyone else?”

Three hands went up immediately, and for once, Will didn’t feel crushing dread as he called on them.

Will smacked the cookies on Hannibal’s desk with more force that was strictly necessary. “From an admirer.”

Hannibal sighed, walking back to the office entrance and flinging the door open. “Franklyn, we have discussed-”

Stopping short, Hannibal turned. “Where did he find you?”

Will frowned. “How many admirers do you have?”

“Perhaps you should tell me?” Hannibal gestured to the cookies. “I assume a short portly man with a beard did not give those to you?”

“Who the hell is he? Is he bothering you?” Something sour pooled at the back of his throat. He didn’t like the idea of this Franklyn bothering Hannibal. Will felt his chest puff, as he thought about someone lurking around Hannibal’s office, making him uncomfortable. “Where is he usually? Is he a patient?”

“I can’t tell you anymore, but I do value your concern greatly, Will.” Hannibal smiled, the look was so fond and warm Will temporarily forgot about his plan to beat the shit out of Franklyn. “Now, could you perhaps tell me who made these?”

“Mendez gave them to me.”

Hannibal’s smile grew, which made Will’s shrink. “Elizabeth? Oh, I should have known.”

Will frowned as Hannibal unwrapped the cookies and took a bite of one. Hannibal chewed thoughtfully, his eyes creasing in pleasure. Will hated those cookies. They smelled funny.

“She added cardamom to the recipe I gave her,” Hannibal said, stroking his fingers over the plate. “What an inventive young woman. I think that type of keen instinct will take her far, don’t you?”

Hannibal held up the plate in offering. Will wanted to knock it out of his hands. “Here, you have more fan mail.”

Will smacked the envelope and the magazine to Hannibal’s chest. Hannibal took both as if they hadn’t been shoved at him hard enough to bruise. He paged through the magazine,

scanning over an article. “Ah, the article about serial mutilators! Esther is a darling to lend me her copy.”

Selecting a leather bookmark from his desk, Hannibal marked the article and gently laid it by the cookies.

Hannibal paused slightly before examining the envelope. “Who gave this to you?”

“David,” Will nearly spat the name.

Something shifted in Hannibal’s expression, were Will to label it, he’d call it anticipation. “Ah, he visited me often during office hours.”

“Did he?” Will was making a list of men who he needed to beat the shit out of, it seemed to be getting longer by the minute.

Hannibal sighed. “He…lacks academic focus.”

“Did you focus him?”

"Evidently not enough." Hannibal opened the note, pulling out a piece of paper and what Will belatedly realized was a Polaroid. Hannibal's eyebrows ticked up and he blinked twice before slipping the contents back in the envelope. “Very daring boy, that David.”

With a flick of his wrist, Hannibal sent the envelope into the fire. Will had to keep himself from leaping and saving it from the flames. “I’m so glad you’ve inspired my class so, Dr. Lecter.”

Hannibal looked up, eyes sharp. “I’m sorry I failed to live up to your standards. I strove to engage the students-”

“Engage them in *what*?”

Hannibal’s mouth ticked in annoyance. “Will, you can’t possibly believe-”

“You’re right, I’m tired,” Will took a deep breath. “I’m just going to go home and rest up.”

That shattered Hannibal’s neutral expression. “I had thought we were going to have dinner together.”

“I’ve already eaten.” Will adjusted his satchel on his shoulder and stormed past Hannibal and out of the office. As he drove home, Will planned a pop quiz he would administer tomorrow.

Will glared at the body on the table. “It’s not the Ripper. It’s barely even a serial killer.”

“What?” Bev cast a look at Will.

“I mean, this is…” Will gestured at the body. “Chaos. It’s a frenzy killing, he shouldn’t be hard to find.”

“But the level of mutilation-”

“The Ripper doesn’t mutilate, he crafts.” Will knew he sounded insane. “This isn’t worthy of him.”

“OK, well, sorry to waste your time,” Bev muttered. “I’ll tell Jack you said to go fuck himself.”

“I just-”

“Let me guess,” Bev said. “You’re in need of a good substitute?”

Will’s jaw tightened. “You should hear them. *Did Hannibal give you the muffin recipe? He promised he’d send it. How’s Hannibal? Will Hannibal be back?*”

“Yeah, that’s…terrible?” Bev nudged him. “They liked him. Are you mad they liked him?”

“No.” Will knew he sounded childish. “But who sends their teacher cookies? And *Hannibal*? Who said they could call him *Hannibal*? I DON’T EVEN CALL HIM HANNIBAL!”

“Which is weird, because everyone else does.”

“No, I just…titles are important.”

“So, are you mad that the students didn’t miss you or that they miss Hannibal?” Bev steered Will toward the coffee pot.

“What? No!”

Bev filled a mug and drank it down. “So…why are you mad?”

“Gravis did extra homework to get his attention, Mendez made him cookies, and Barns sent him inappropriate photos.”

“NO SHIT! What were they?”

“They were chocolate-”

“NO ONE GIVES A FUCK ABOUT COOKIES!” Bev topped up her mug. “I’m talking about the pics.”

“I-I don’t know, it was a polaroid and Hannibal threw it into the fire at his office.”

“Damn, bet it was good if he had to burn it.”

“Fucking the students is a fireable-”

“You think he fucked a student?”

“Well, no.”

Bev sighed and moved to her desk. “Then why are you storming around here like someone pissed in your cornflakes?”

Will flopped on a corner of Bev’s desk. “It’s inappropriate for them to take liberties with Dr. Lecter.”

“Like sending nudes and baking him cookies?”

“Yes!”

“That is inappropriate.” Bev hummed, then glanced up. “Almost as inappropriate as having dinner at your shrink’s place all the time, demanding he bring you food when you’re in the hospital, letting him give your dogs new collars, texting him all the goddamn time, running ahead of him at crime scenes so you can grab a door and open it…”

“Wait a goddamn minute.”

“Will, I don’t know what you think you’re doing with Hannibal, but I can tell you what the rest of us know you’re doing.” Bev leaned back in her chair. “And what Hannibal hopes you’re doing.”

“I’m not-”

Bev patted Will’s thigh. “Just make sure he’s into it before you piss on him to mark your territory – that’s all I’m saying.”

The mood in his class was decidedly chilly when he marched in. Will ignored it, placing his briefcase on the desk and pulling out a stack of papers. “My little quiz yesterday showed me that some of you have not been putting in all the effort I expect from future FBI agents.”

Mendez raised her eyebrow at him. Irritatingly, she had aced the damn thing. He could feel the worry from the rest of the class, it came at him in waves. Pencils tapping, throats clearing, hissing whispers in the back – pathetic attempts to blame him for their shortcomings.

They’re not all hopeless, you just make them feel so.

When had Hannibal become the voice in his head? He let himself poke at the emotions assaulting him. They were angry, yes, but also worried. He was the teacher to survive, the one

everyone had to get through to get to their goal. He began to wonder if anyone really learned anything from him other than how to thicken their skin.

Will cleared his throat. “I, *uh*, I think that might be a failure on both our parts.”

There was a much louder wave of murmurs.

“Today, we’ll go over the material covered on the quiz again and if there are questions, I’ll address them.” Will tossed the stack of quizzes into the trash bin by his desk. “Your understanding of this is more important that getting a good grade. It could save someone. I’m supposed to help you do that.”

Will picked up a blank copy of the quiz and leaned on his desk. “Question 1…”

Will waved Mendez over as the class ended. She waited patiently as a few tentative students approached him. It reminded him of Winston – as they watched him with big eyes, shifting on primed feet, ready to run if he reverted to the teacher they knew.

It was still overwhelming, having to withstand the small throng of students. He could still feel them, their wants, their messy chaotic feelings washing over his own, but he tried to focus on each one – each question as it came. Instead of walling himself up, he tried to simply bail out his boat, slowly and methodically until each student walked away and he was left still afloat, not drowned in a mire of over-eager attention.

Only David and Mendez remained with him now. David walked up, getting too close to Will. “Did you give Hannibal my envelope?”

“Yes.”

“You’re sure?” He toyed with a new envelope in his hands.

“Mr. Barns, any further correspondence will need to be hand delivered by yourself.” Will raised his chin. “Anything you hand me will be put on the projector at the next class.”

David stiffened slightly, before turning on his heel and walking out of the class, envelope still clutched in his hands. Mendez watched him go before cocking her head at Will. “He didn’t really send Hannibal nudes, did he? He said he did, but we all thought it was bull-”

“I can’t tell you that.” Will felt something mean stir in his stomach. “I can only confirm that Hannibal tossed the contents into his fireplace immediately upon opening it.”

Mendez’s mouth curved just slightly. It was a Hannibal smile, and he resented her for having it. She blinked and her face was back to it’s neutral formation. “What did you want, Professor Graham?”

“The recipe.”

“I’m sorry?”

“The recipe Hannibal gave you, for the cookies,” Will could feel a bit of heat on his neck, but muscled past it. “I’d like that please.”

“Oh.” Mendez studied him a moment longer before pulling out her phone. “Just send it to your work email?”

“That’ll be fine.”

A few taps and Will heard the *whoosh* sound effect of an email being sent. “Done.”

“Thank you.” Will watched her walk away, so straight and certain of herself. He had never sought out the approval of his students, never much cared if they liked him. Perhaps, it wouldn’t hurt to make a few changes. “Mendez?”

“Sir?”

“He really liked them. Your, *uh*, your cookies.” Will clenched his hands to resist the urge to ruffle his hair. “He thought the cardamom was an inventive choice.”

This time, the smile was more than a mere suggestion on her face, it was broad and settled about her eyes. “Thank you, sir. See you Wednesday.”

Will watched her walk away and found himself smiling at an empty room. He opened his laptop and checked his emails, frowning as he read the recipe over and over.

Pulling out his phone, he dialed Bev, not bothering with greetings when she answered. “What the fuck is caster sugar?”

Will hadn’t received a text from Hannibal in nearly a week. To be fair, he hadn’t sent one either, but still, he felt foolish every time he heard his phone’s little *ping* and excitedly checked it only to find that Harley’s ear medication was ready. He never knew a text about ear medication could be devastating, but that’s what knowing Hannibal Lecter had brought him to.

So, when Will finally texted 24 hours before his appointment – as per Hannibal’s policy – to cancel, he hadn’t expected a response.

One came, however.

Are you ill?

Will smiled to himself, picturing Hannibal writing out an ingredient list for his chicken noodle soup recipe.

I’m fine, just need to get a few papers graded.

Silence after that. Will tried not to take it personally. He wrapped up office hours early, and had offered Esther a bit of encouragement on what promised to be a fairly tolerable paper on display pathologies. Overall, Will had to admit he didn't mind that his students weren't afraid of him anymore. Except David, David he would keep scared until the end of the semester.

Packing up his things, Will hurried to his car, if he was lucky, Route 50 would be running smoothly and he'd be able to get to Baltimore before Hannibal finished plating dinner.

Hannibal was still wearing his apron when he opened the door. It seemed an odd slip for such a fastidious man, he must have been distracted. Perhaps upset that his last patient of the day had cancelled?

"Will." Hannibal's face remained superficially unchanged, but warmth had spread in his eyes, fondness softening the lines of his mouth. "What brings you to my door?"

"Uh…" Will had practiced on the way up. He had a story. A good one, too. It was a reasonable, plausible reason for him to be at Hannibal's door. He'd rehearsed the damn thing several times, accounting for multiple possible answers from Hannibal. It was all planned out, no way he could fuck it up. Only, he hadn't prepared for that look, that warm, fiery look that lurked just beyond the carefully composed features of Hannibal's face. "I needed-"

Help?

Advice?

You.

Hannibal stepped forward, he sniffed subtly at the air around Will before sliding a hand around Will's back and guiding him inside. "Are you feeling well, Will?"

"I'm fine." Will let himself be led to the kitchen and installed in the comfortable chair in the corner. "Just, *uh*, wanted to return your dishes, Dr. Lecter."

Hannibal's eyebrow quirked. Will didn't have any of the dishes with him, that much was glaringly obvious, but the doctor seemed to decide to let that go. "Cooking for yourself again?"

"A rather tasteless endeavor." Will grumbled. He'd had three peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in the past two days. That had never been a problem before Hannibal started luring him like a timid stray with succulent meat and fancy sauces.

"Are you having trouble with taste again, Will?"

"I wasn't," Will watched as Hannibal selected a knife. The doctor's long fingers curling around the blade. "But I find I'm…lacking."

“Lacking for spice or for company?” Hannibal began to chop.

“*Yes*, I believe is the answer to that.”

“My kitchen is always open to my friends, Will.” Hannibal’s hands were nearly a blur as he worked the blade through some herbs. “I hope you’ll think about staying for dinner.”

“I would love that,” Will said, fingers toying with the worn strap of his satchel. “Thank you, Hannibal.”

The steady rhythm of the knife faltered. Will could feel that sharp stare on him without needing to lift his eyes. He took a breath, pulling a small Tupperware container from his satchel. Standing, he walked around the kitchen island to stand by Hannibal.

“I almost forgot,” Will placed the container on the counter in front of Hannibal, keeping his eyes on his shoes. “Another gift from an admirer.”

Hannibal placed the blade on the counter and picked up the container, studying it. “I wonder who is admiring me now?”

Pulling off the lid, Hannibal glanced down at the cookies inside. They were pathetic, really. Flat brown disks with burned edges and a wonky texture. Will had picked the best of the bunch, the ones that didn’t crumble to pieces as he handled them. Really, he should have made another batch, but Will was worried about what would happen to his nerve if he waited long enough to make edible baked goods.

Hannibal’s face was almost aggressively neutral. Not a minute twitch of his mouth nor a slight narrowing of his eyes gave Will any indication of if the cookies were as bad as he feared.

Bringing a cookie to his mouth, Hannibal bit. The crack that rung from the cookie was alarmingly loud. Will hoped it wasn’t Hannibal’s tooth. Will watched as the doctor chewed carefully, each crunch and grinding sound echoing through the room. After a few endless seconds, Hannibal swallowed.

“A strong whiskey flavor,” Hannibal mused. Will winced slightly. He’d planned on putting a teaspoon in, like Beverly had instructed via Skype, but he’d gotten distracted and dumped…more into the mixture. Hannibal cracked the cookie he was still holding and sniffed at it. “A bold flavor. This can’t be Elizabeth’s work, she lacks the creative spirit, the genius to cook with such passion. The person who made these would have to be brilliant, perhaps a bit socially challenged, but utterly beautiful and fascinating in every way. I thin-”

Will slapped the cookie out of Hannibal’s hands, latching onto the front of his shirt and dragging the doctor into a kiss. Their noses bonked. Their teeth clacked. Will was pretty sure he stepped on Hannibal’s toes when he attempted to get closer.

It was a terrible kiss.

But then, strong fingers stroked along Will's jaw, tilting the empath just slightly to the left. An arm banded around Will's back and the lips against his own softened, sucking gently as the whole world seemingly slotted into place. Hannibal, it seemed, knew exactly how they fit together.

Will swiped his tongue along Hannibal's teeth, flicking at the doctor's fangs when he felt their sharp points. Hannibal made a guttural noise and pressed Will into the kitchen island. He slotted his leg between Will's thighs and began rolling his hips. Will let himself fall backward, the scent of thyme and sage blooming as he was rolled in the half-chopped herbs.

Making a small noise in the back of his throat, Will released Hannibal's shirt and sought the doctor's hair, ruffling the carefully quaffed strands as he tugged on it. Hannibal released him, eyes black as he panted near Will's mouth.

"Last chance to get us to a bed," Will gasped, hooking his leg around Hannibal's hip and pressing them together. "You kiss me again, this happens on the floor."

Something bright and sharp sparked in Hannibal's eyes. For a second Will could see something dark and nearly feral lurking behind Hannibal's gentlemanly exterior. He wanted to meet that creature, soon. Before Will could tease too much at that thought, Hannibal's mouth was on him and he was dragged to the floor. They must have hit the cutting board on the way down, as herbs rained around them as the settled on the cool tile. The board clattered somewhere near their head, but Will was too busy biting at Hannibal's lower lip to worry about concussions.

Steady fingers stroked down Will's chest, flicking open the button on his pants when they reached it. Will could hear the sound of a zipper, but was distracted when Hannibal's mouth latched onto his pulse, sucking in rhythm with the hammering of his heart. Groaning, Will ground his hips upward, seeking friction and finding it as a large hand palmed him through his boxers.

Will moaned, his skin prickling and flushing at the heat of Hannibal's hand.

"God, Hannibal, this isn't going to last." Will writhed beneath Hannibal's weight. It had been so long since he'd been pressed down and really touched, his entire being seemed to vibrate. Hannibal released Will's cock only long enough to rip the apron from his body and unfasten his own pants. Will tugged at Hannibal's belt, dragging his trousers and underwear down to his mid thighs. As Hannibal worked to free Will from the confines of his pants, Will took the opportunity to snake beneath the doctor's shirt and drag his nails down the soft skin of Hannibal's back. Will's claws earned him a groan as Hannibal finally slipped the fabric from Will's hips, leaving him bare assed on the cold kitchen floor.

"This will last, Will." Hannibal kissed him softly, making Will's heart clench as he stole sage-scented kisses. With a roll of his hips, Hannibal rubbed their cocks together and wrung a keening cry from Will's throat. Tangling his fingers in Will's hair, Hannibal cradled the empath's head as he pressed a small kiss to the tip of Will's chin. "I promise you it will last."

Will held his hand up to Hannibal's kiss swollen mouth, smiling when the doctor licked his palm. Carefully, Will took both cocks in hand, stroking slow and tight. He watched as Hannibal began to roll his hips into Will's grip, panting as the sensation built.

Hannibal groaned and buried his face in Will's neck, inhaling his sweaty curls and mouthing at a flexing tendon. Will could feel his body going taut, the sensation of Hannibal's cock rubbing against his own making his body sing like a livewire. "Ha-Han-"

Teeth set themselves into Will's neck, digging in just enough for Will to wonder what damage they could really do. Hannibal's thrusts sped up as his teeth clamped and for a moment, Will could see those fangs digging in and ripping the breath from his body. Will shuddered and spilled over his hand and onto his stomach, caught between Hannibal's teeth. Hannibal released him, pressing sucking kisses to the bite as he spurted into Will's fingers.

They fell into an inelegant heap, still panting into each other's mouths as they came back to themselves. Will licked at Hannibal's mouth weakly, he could taste blood. The copper on his tongue was enough for his cock to give a painful twitch, trying to fill again.

"I can't believe we just fucked on the kitchen floor like a couple of horny teens."

Hannibal rolled off of Will, pressing to the empath's side as he flexed his knee. There was an audible *pop*. "I can promise you, Will, I'm no longer a teen."

"Yeah," Will winced, rolling his shoulder and hearing it click. "What the hell were we thinking?"

Hannibal rolled to his side, propping his head up to smile down at Will. His hair falling across his face, a thyme sprig stuck in the bangs gave him a boyish quality that Will wanted to remember the rest of his life. "It must have been something you put in the cookies."

Will plucked the thyme sprig from Hannibal's hair, worrying it between his fingers and letting the scent bloom between them. "How did you know they were mine?"

The smile lines around Hannibal's eyes deepened. He bent down and pecked a kiss to the corner of Will's mouth. "You seemed rather agitated by David's missive at our lass session."

Another kiss landed softly on the bridge of Will's nose. "And Elizabeth had some alarming things to say about your comportment during the surprise quiz you administered."

Will frowned and struggled to sit up, only to be pressed back down by Hannibal. "You text with Mendez?"

"Only about you." Hannibal kissed Will's frown. Will was ashamed to feel the edge uncurl under Hannibal's lips. "Ms. Katz also sent me some screen shots from some sort of video calling service. You had quite a bit of flour in your hair."

Will closed his eyes, letting Hannibal kiss the line of the flush as it crept up his cheeks. Will felt something shift on his nose and opened his eyes to a toothy grin. Hannibal tapped

Will's glasses. "Is this damage related to you cooking endeavors?"

Bringing his hand up to trace where they were taped together, Will sighed. "They fell in the mixer."

"Ah," Hannibal dipped down to take Will's mouth fully. A slow sweet kiss that was a promise of more kisses to come. When Hannibal drew back, Will made a small noise of complaint. Hannibal merely smiled. "I think the definitive piece of evidence, however, was the clump of dog fur in the container."

Will laughed, smacking half-heartedly at Hannibal's chest before drawing the man down for another kiss. "So…you don't want my help with dinner?"

"NO." Hannibal shook his head vigorously. "Why don't you clean up and I'll finish the pastitsio."

"What's that?"

"A Greek dish featuring spiced beef or lamb and noodles with a bechamel sauce."

"OH!" Will grinned. "Hamburger Helper! Cool."

Hannibal glared at Will for a moment before breaking into a broad grin. "Get out of my kitchen, Will."

End Notes

Next Up:

Will goes back to his old life...but does he want to?

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!